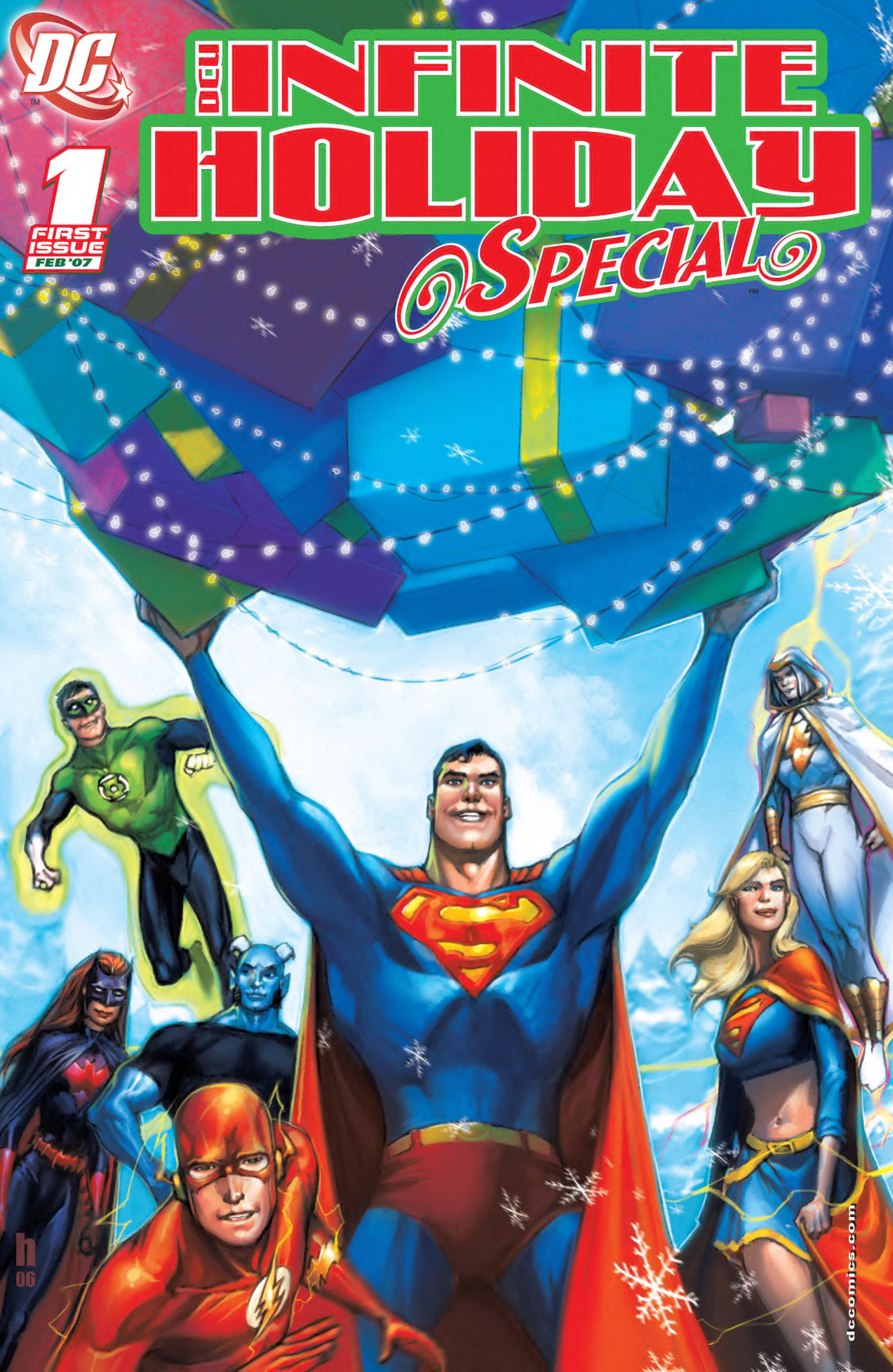
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Green Lantern in "A HECTOR HAMMOND CHRISTMAS"

Keith Champagne: Writer
John Byrne: Penciller
Keith Champagne: Inker
Nathan Eyring: Colorist
Travis Lanham: Letterer
Michael Siglain: Associate Editor
Peter Tomasi: Editor

Shadowpact in "CHRISTMAS SPIRITS"

Bill Willingham: Writer
Cory Walker: Artist
Mike Atiyeh: Colorist
Travis Lanham: Letterer
Joey Cavalieri: Editor

Supergirl in "ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS..."

Joe Kelly: Writer
Ale Garza: Art
J.J. Kirby- Color
Travis Lanham: Letters
Jeanine Schaefer: Associate Editor
Eddie Berganza: Head Elf

Trials of Shazam in "GIFT OF THE MAGI"

Tony Bedard: Writer
Marcos Marz: Penciller
Luciana Del Negro: Inker
Rod Reis: Colorist
Travis Lanham: Letterer
Tom Palmer Jr: Associate Editor
Mike Carlin: Editor

The Flash in "FATHER CHRISTMAS"

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Giuseppe Camuncoli: Penciller
Lorenzo Ruggiero: Inker
HIFI Design: Colorist
John Hill: Letterer
Rachel Gluckstern: Associate Editor
Joan Hilty: Editor

Batwoman in "LIGHTS"

Greg Rucka: Writer
Christian Alamy: Artist
Jason Wright: Colorist
Jared Fletcher: Letterer
Michael Siglain: Associate Editor
Peter Tomasi: Editor

Superman in "YES, TYRONE, THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS"

Kelley Puckett: Writer
Pete Woods: Artist
Brad Anderson: Colorist
Phil Balsman: Letterer
Nachie Castro: Associate Editor
Matt Idelson: Editor
Superman created by Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster
Batman created by Bob Kane

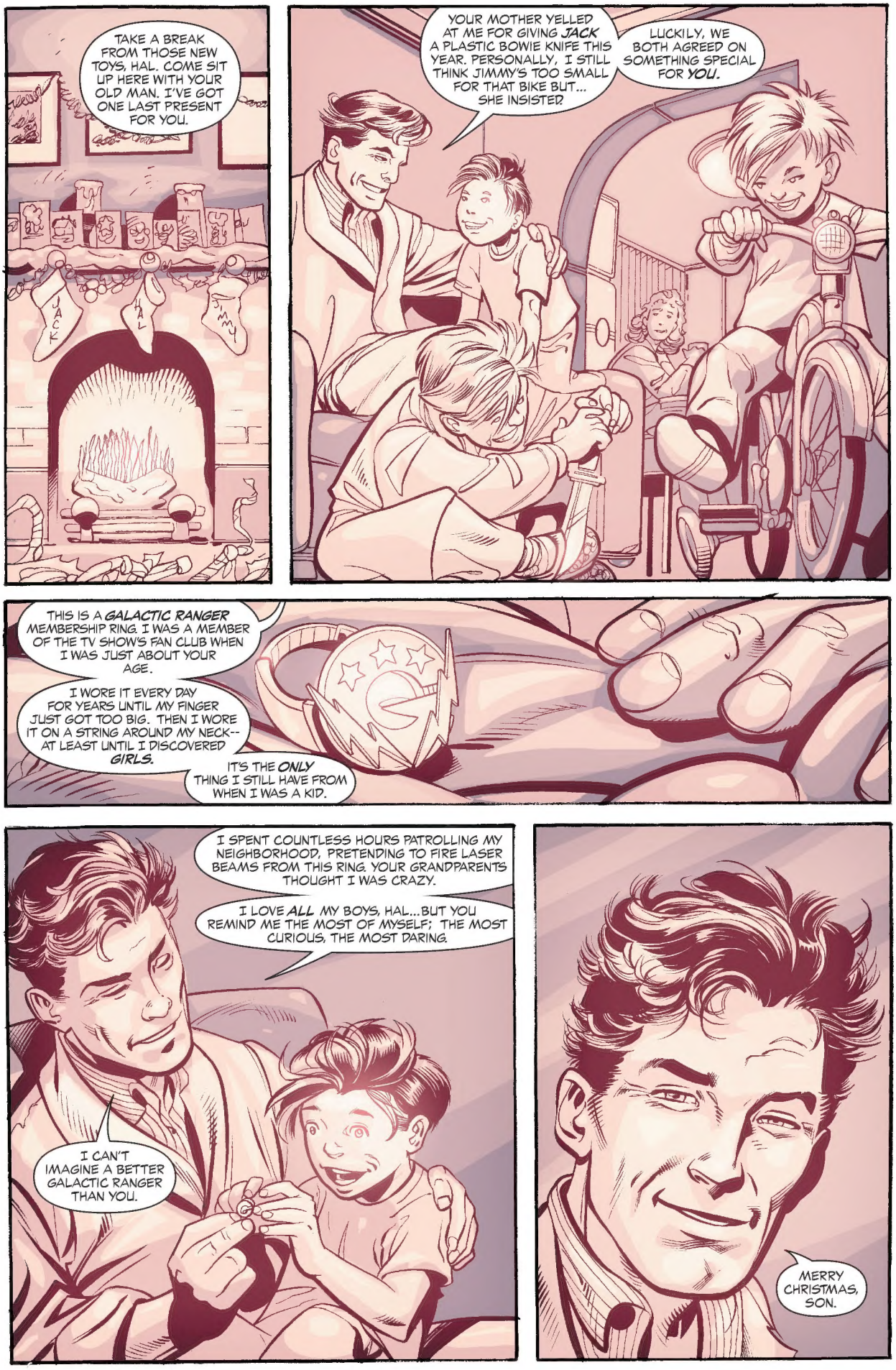
Cover by Howard Porter

CHRISTMAS DAY.
EDWARDS AIR FORCE BASE.
OH.
OH, HAL...
...HOW WONDERFUL...

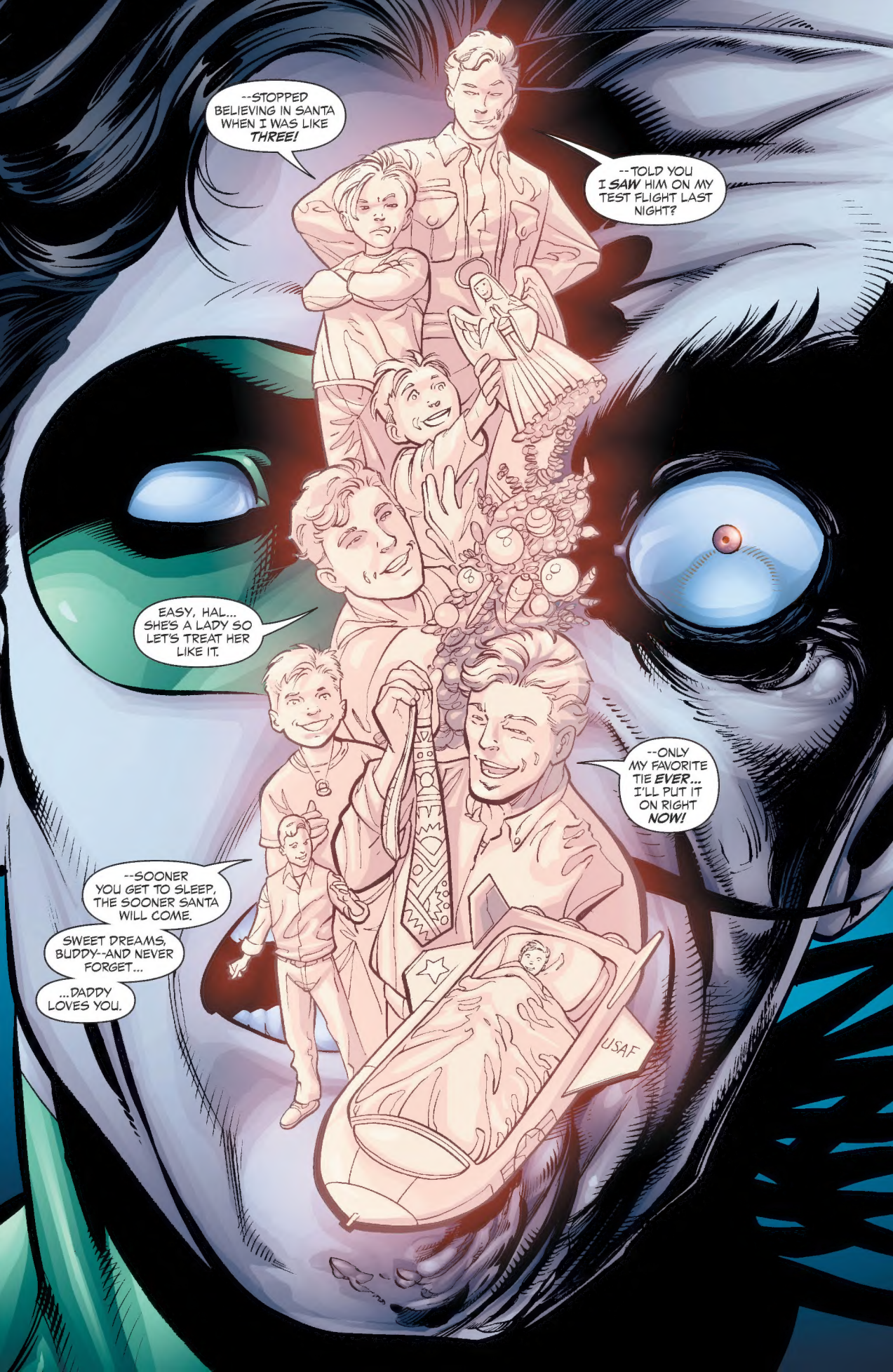
A Hector Hammond Christmas
Written by Keith Champagne
Pencilled by John Byrne
Inked by Keith Champagne Lettered by Travis Lanham
Colored by Nathan Eyring Associate Edited by Michael Siglain
Edited by Peter Tomasi
I MUST HAVE BEEN A VERY GOOD BOY THIS YEAR INDEED.

MY MOST PRECIOUS CHRISTMAS WISH HAS FINALLY COME TRUE.
GIVE IT A REST, HAMMOND. I'VE GOT BETTER PLACES TO BE.
YOU'VE BEEN BEGGING TO SEE ME, TO GIVE ME A MESSAGE.
GET IT OUT OF YOUR SYSTEM. MAKE IT FAST.
TODAY, I'M SPENDING TIME WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE ACTUALLY IMPORTANT TO ME.
THAT'S EXACTLY MY POINT, HAL JORDAN. I HAVE A MESSAGE FOR YOU FROM ONE OF YOUR MOST IMPORTANT.
YOUR FATHER.
I KNEW THIS WAS GOING TO BE A WASTE OF TIME.
GOOD RIDDANCE, HAMMOND.
HAL, PLEASE!! WAIT!!
LET ME EXPLAIN!

I'M SHUT OFF IN HERE. MY MIND CAN'T REACH OUT MORE THAN A FEW FEET. I'VE HAD NOWHERE TO TURN BUT...INWARDS. DEEP INSIDE OF MYSELF.
I DON'T KNOW HOW EXACTLY, PERHAPS IT WAS A FLUKE BUT...
...SOMEHOW MY MIND TOUCHED THE OTHER SIDE. I MET YOUR FATHER.
THAT'S THE MOST RIDICULOUS LIE I'VE EVER BEEN ASKED TO SWALLOW.
YOU WOUND ME, HAL. I WOULD NEVER LIE TO YOU. NOT TODAY OF ALL DAYS, AND ESPECIALLY NOT ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
LET ME GUESS. ALL IT WILL COST ME TO HEAR THIS SUPPOSED MESSAGE FROM MY LONG-DEAD FATHER IS...A MEMORY OF A HOT DATE WITH CAROL FERRIS?
PREDICTABLE AND PATHETIC, HAMMOND.
REALLY, HAL. IT'S CHRISTMAS.
PERHAPS SOMETHING... WARMER?
YOU KNOW WHAT, HAMMOND? FOR ONCE, YOU'RE RIGHT. IT IS CHRISTMAS.
HAVE A TASTE OF WHAT YOU'RE MISSING. WHAT YOU COULD HAVE KNOWN IF YOU HADN'T THROWN YOUR LIFE AWAY.
THE WARMTH THAT ONLY FAMILY ON CHRISTMAS DAY CAN BRING.


TAKE A BREAK FROM THOSE NEW TOYS, HAL. COME SIT UP HERE WITH YOUR OLD MAN. I'VE GOT ONE LAST PRESENT FOR YOU.
JACK
HAL
JIMMY
YOUR MOTHER YELLED AT ME FOR GIVING JACK A PLASTIC BOWIE KNIFE THIS YEAR. PERSONALLY, I STILL THINK JIMMY'S TOO SMALL FOR THAT BIKE BUT... SHE INSISTED
LUCKILY, WE BOTH AGREED ON SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR YOU.
THIS IS A GALACTIC RANGER MEMBERSHIP RING. I WAS A MEMBER OF THE TV SHOW'S FAN CLUB WHEN I WAS JUST ABOUT YOUR AGE.
I WORE IT EVERY DAY FOR YEARS UNTIL MY FINGER JUST GOT TOO BIG. THEN I WORE IT ON A STRING AROUND MY NECK--AT LEAST UNTIL I DISCOVERED GIRLS.
IT'S THE ONLY THING I STILL HAVE FROM WHEN I WAS A KID.
I SPENT COUNTLESS HOURS PATROLLING MY NEIGHBORHOOD, PRETENDING TO FIRE LASER BEAMS FROM THIS RING. YOUR GRANDPARENTS THOUGHT I WAS CRAZY.
I LOVE ALL MY BOYS, HAL...BUT YOU REMIND ME THE MOST OF MYSELF; THE MOST CURIOUS, THE MOST DARING.
I CAN'T IMAGINE A BETTER GALACTIC RANGER THAN YOU.
MERRY CHRISTMAS, SON.

THAT WAS JUST LOVELY, HAL. PROPHETIC EVEN.
THE ONLY THING I REMEMBER MY FATHER EVER GIVING ME IS A BEATING.
MY HEART BLEEDS. NOW IF YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO TELL ME, SPIT IT OUT. I'M THIRTY SECONDS AWAY FROM LEAVING.
THE HELL YOU ARE, HAL!
NOT UNTIL I LET YOU GO.
KNEW-- YOU WERE FULL-- OF--
YOU DON'T GET OFF THAT EASY, HAL. NOT WITH ONLY GIVING ME JUST ONE PRESENT.
ENOUGH FOREPLAY. LET'S START UNWRAPPING.


--STOPPED BELIEVING IN SANTA WHEN I WAS LIKE THREE!
--TOLD YOU I SAW HIM ON MY TEST FLIGHT LAST NIGHT?
EASY, HAL... SHE'S A LADY SO LET'S TREAT HER LIKE IT.
--ONLY MY FAVORITE TIE EVER... I'LL PUT IT ON RIGHT NOW!
--SOONER YOU GET TO SLEEP, THE SOONER SANTA WILL COME.
SWEET DREAMS, BUDDY--AND NEVER FORGET...
...DADDY LOVES YOU.
USAF

OH, YES... OH, HAL...
...SO DELICIOUS...
KRSH
STAY OUT OF MY HEAD, YOU PATHETIC FREAK!
WHUMP

A-hrf.
HA.
HA HA HA HA!
DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE LAUGHING AT, HAMMOND-- UNLESS IT'S HOW *RIDICULOUS* YOU LOOK RIGHT NOW.
OH, HAL...
I *KNEW* I COULD RUIN YOUR CHRISTMAS IF I ONLY PUT MY MIND TO IT.
NOT EVEN CLOSE, POTATO HEAD.
UNLESS BY RUINING MY CHRISTMAS YOU MEANT FORCING ME TO RELIVE SOME WONDERFUL MOMENTS WITH MY FATHER.
WE'RE ALL DONE HERE. SORRY ABOUT THE MESS.
NEXT TIME, HAL.
NEXT TIME I'M CHANGING ALL THE RULES.
44
WHATEVER THAT MEANS.

HEH.
GALACTIC RANGERS INDEED.
MERRY CHRISTMAS, DAD.
I LOVE YOU, TOO.
THE END

THE STEADY DEGENERATION OF LONG-TAMED MAGIC INTO ITS MORE UNRULY FORMS DOESN'T TAKE A BREAK, EVEN IN, OR MAYBE ESPECIALLY IN, THIS MOST MAGICAL OF SEASONS.
AND DARK FORCES SEEM EVER WILLING TO ARRAY THEMSELVES AGAINST THE POWERS OF--BLAH, BLAH, BLAH.
ON SECOND THOUGHT, FORGET THE USUAL STENTORIAN NONSENSE. JUST THIS ONCE, LET'S TAKE A BREAK FROM GRIM INTRODUCTORY BLATHER, HEAVY WITH GRAVITAS.
INSTEAD, ENJOY THIS NICE CHRISTMAS STORY.

"OUR TALE TAKES PLACE IN THE EXTRADIMENSIONAL BAR KNOWN AS THE OBLIVION.
"IT'S A GATHERING PLACE FOR THOSE WHO ARE MAGIC IN NATURE OR WHO'VE LEARNED TO MANIPULATE ITS EXTRAORDINARY ENERGIES."
EXCUSE ME.
COMING THROUGH.
MIND THE FEET.

Shadowpact Stars in:

Christmas Spirits

Bill Willingham
Writer

Cory Walker
Artist

Travis Lanham-Letterer Mike Atiyeh-Colorist Joey Cavalieri-Editor

CHRIS! I THOUGHT I SAW YOU FROM ACROSS THE ROOM.
WHAT'S UP, BIG GUY? READY FOR THE BIG DAY?
I MOST CERTAINLY AM NOT.
HALF OF THE REINDEER ARE DOWN WITH THE FLU, AND THE ELVES ARE WAY BEHIND ON TOY PRODUCTION.
SO YOU DECIDED THE BEST WAY TO HELP WAS HIDE OUT HERE AND DRINK YOURSELF INTO A NICE PRE-CHRISTMAS FUNK?
DON'T JUDGE ME, DANNY BOY. YOU DON'T HAVE THE YEARS.
I'VE GOT ANOTHER PROBLEM, BIGGER THAN THE OTHER TWO, AND I CAN'T SOLVE THIS ONE ALONE.
I NEED SHADOWPACT'S HELP.
SURE, CHRIS. I'LL SUMMON THE TROOPS.
COME ON WITH ME. WE'VE CONVERTED ONE OF THE BACK ROOMS INTO A FIRST-CLASS SUPER-TEAM MEETING ROOM.

A FEW MINUTES LATER...
IT'S THE A.C.L. AGAIN!
THE WHAT?
THE ANTI-CHRISTMAS LEAGUE! THEY'VE CALLED ME AGAIN. THEY'RE A GANG OF TERRORIST THUGS DETERMINED TO PUT A STOP TO ME AND MY ORGANIZATION.
DETECTIVE CHIMP: IMBUED BY THE POWER OF THE FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH, HE KNOWS THE LANGUAGES OF EVERY LIVING CREATURE AND CLAIMS TO BE THE WORLD'S GREATEST DETECTIVE.
NIGHTMASTER: WIELDER OF THE POWERFUL SWORD OF NIGHT AND LEADER OF THE SHADOWPACT.
BLUE DEVIL: TRANSFORMED INTO A DEMON OF THE PITS, HE FIGHTS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS.
ENCHANTRESS: A POWERFUL SORCERESS SPECIALIZING IN COMBAT MAGIC.
RAGMAN: HE BORROWS MYSTIC ENERGY FROM HIS RAGGED SUIT OF CAPTIVE SOULS.
NIGHTSHADE: SHE SUMMONS AND COMMANDS PHYSICAL DARKNESS.

WHY?
WHO KNOWS? IT SEEMS, NO MATTER WHAT FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD, THERE'S A TERRORIST ORGANIZATION AGAINST IT.
AND WHAT IS IT YOU WANT FROM US?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?
MAYBE NOT SO MUCH TO A JEWISH BOY FROM THE EAST SIDE OF GOTHAM.
I WANT YOU TO SAVE CHRISTMAS!
Uhm... OF COURSE. IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN SO OBVIOUS TO ME.
I WAS THINKING BLUE DEVIL COULD RIDE SHOTGUN IN THE SLED WITH HIS BIG BLASTING STICK. AND MAYBE WE COULD HIDE MAGIC MONKEY IN THE BACK, AMONG THE TOY SACKS.

MAGIC MONKEY? HE'S GOT THE POWERS TO VISIT A BILLION-PLUS HOMES IN A SINGLE NIGHT, AND HE KNOWS THE NAME OF EVERY GIRL AND BOY, BUT ME HE DOESN'T KNOW?
AND MAYBE YOU, NIGHTSHADE, CAN SURROUND US IN A PROTECTIVE CLOAK OF DARKNESS, AND--
I'M YOUR
NOW WAIT A MINUTE, CHRIS. YOU'RE OBVIOUSLY PRETTY GOOD AT WHAT YOU DO, SO ALLOW US TO BE GOOD AT WHAT WE DO.
WE'LL HELP YOU MAKE SURE THE DELIVERIES GET THROUGH, BUT WE'LL DO IT OUR WAY.
BASICALLY, WHAT WE'LL DO IS THROW AN INVISIBLE CORDON OF PROTECTION AROUND YOU THAT WILL BE THERE AT ALL TIMES, BUT YOU'LL NEVER SEE US.
THAT WAY WE'LL BE ABLE TO FLUSH OUT THIS A.C.L. AND POSSIBLY PUT A STOP TO THEM FOREVER.
"WHILE YOU CONCENTRATE ON MAKING YOUR ROUNDS, WE'LL SHADOW YOU, ALWAYS ON THE LOOKOUT FOR AGENTS OF THE A.C.L."
HERE HE COMES, COMRADE. APPROACHING FROM THE NORTHWEST.
I SEE HIM, COMRADE.

"WE'LL TAKE THEM OUT AS WE FIND THEM, ON THE FLY."
I DON'T THINK SO, "COMRADES." YOU BOYS WON'T BE SHOOTING ANYTHING TONIGHT.
WHAT THE--!
"QUICKLY. QUIETLY."
SAY GOODNIGHT, GRACIE.
"AND EFFICIENTLY.

"THE A.C.L. WILL FIND THEY'RE NO MATCH FOR ANY MEMBER OF SHADOWPACT, NO MATTER HOW GREAT THEIR NUMBERS OR HOW WELL-ARMED THEY ARE.
"THEY'LL FIND OUT TO THEIR REGRET THAT THEY'RE WAY OUT OF THEIR LEAGUE.

"TRUST US TO MAKE SURE YOU CAN GO SAFELY ON YOUR WAY, UNCONCERNED WITH ANY DANGER FROM THOSE A.C.L. GOONS."
YOU AREN'T GOING TO GET TO RUIN CHRISTMAS THIS YEAR!
AND DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT COMING AFTER HANUKKAH EITHER!
"DON'T EVEN TRY LOOKING FOR US, CHRIS. WE'LL BE THERE.
"BUT WE LIVE IN THE SHADOWS, ON GUARD IN THE NIGHT. WE'RE THE ONES WHO PROTECT THE WORLD WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT."
UH-UH. NOT THIS TIME, FELLAS.

SO, GO AHEAD, CHRIS, OLD BUDDY. PAY YOUR TAB AND GO HOME, SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT WE'VE GOT YOUR BACK.
WE WON'T LET YOU DOWN, BIG GUY.
WELL?
WELL WHAT?
IT'S ONLY TWO DAYS TO CHRISTMAS. AREN'T WE GOING TO START PREPARING TO FIGHT THESE A.C.L. GOONS?
NOPE. WE DON'T NEED TO.
THE ANTI-CHRISTMAS LEAGUE DOESN'T EXIST, RAGS OLD BUDDY.
AS NEAR AS WE CAN TELL, IT'S JUST A PRACTICAL JOKE SOME MERRY PRANKSTER HAS BEEN PLAYING ON THE OLD GUY FOR SEVERAL YEARS NOW.
CHRIS GETS PARANOID ABOUT THEM AT THIS TIME EVERY YEAR. WE LIKE THE OLD GUY SO WE INDULGE HIM.
BUT WHO--?
WE DON'T KNOW. JIM TOOK SEVERAL YEARS DETERMINING IT WASN'T ME.

SOMETIME LATER...
IS THE COAST CLEAR?
YEAH, BLITZ, BUT HURRY UP, BEFORE THEY MISS THE PHONE FROM BEHIND THE BAR.
THEN, HURRY AND DIAL THE NUMBER. COME ON, BOBO, GET WITH IT.
DON'T CALL ME BOBO, AND DON'T BE SO IMPATIENT. THE FAT MAN'S BARELY HAD TIME TO GET HOME BY NOW.
LISTEN UP, FAT MAN, THIS IS THE ANTI-CHRISTMAS LEAGUE. WE'RE GOING TO GET YOU THIS TIME, AND DON'T THINK YOUR MAGIC SUPERHERO FRIENDS CAN SAVE YOU.
THIS IS GREAT. I ACTUALLY HEARD HIM MOANING BEFORE HE HUNG UP.
YOU'RE A MEAN DRUNK, BLITZ.
MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM SHADOWPACT: YOUR FAVORITE SUPERHERO TEAM IN TIMES OF DARKNESS-- OR ESPECIALLY VICIOUS OUTBREAKS OF PRANKSTERISM.

I DON'T GET IT. IT'S A RELIGION THING, RIGHT?
YES. IT'S A MAJOR HOLIDAY IN THE CHRISTIAN FAITHS--
--EVEN THOUGH MANY SCHOLARS AGREE THAT JESUS'S ACTUAL BIRTHDAY PROBABLY WASN'T IN DECEMBER AT ALL?
AND SANTA CLAUS ISN'T IN THE BIBLE..?
YOU'RE JUST MESSING WITH ME NOW, AREN'T YOU?
A LITTLE. NOT REALLY. I DON'T GET IT.
PUT ASIDE THE TRAPPINGS OF THE DAY FOR A SECOND, AND LET'S FOCUS ON THE *SPIRIT* OF CHRISTMAS.
I THOUGHT SPIRITS WERE FOR HALLOWEEN... OKAY, I'LL STOP NOW.
CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT *LOVE. HOPE. CHARITY--*
YEAH. THAT'S WHAT ALL THE *STORE WINDOWS* ARE PIMPING. "30% OFF CHARITY." "BUY LOVE, GET HOPE FREE."
MAYBE THEY WOULD...
IF SOMEONE HAD TO READ ALL OF THESE.
LETTERS TO SUPERMAN
Joe Kelly-Writer
Ale Garza-Art
Tim Townsend-page | Inks
J.J. Kirby-Colors
Travis Lanham-Letters
Jeanine Schaefer-Associate Editor
Eddie Berganza-Head Elf
ALL I WANT FOR CHRISTMAS...

YOU ANSWER THEM ALL? BY CHRISTMAS?!
NO, HEH, NOT EVEN BY HALF...BUT I DO WHAT I CAN.
A LOT OF THESE ARE JUST PEOPLE WHINING! THEY WANT YOU TO SOLVE ALL OF THEIR PROBLEMS--
WE GET A LOT OF THAT, BUT MOST OF THEM ARE THE REAL DEAL. PEOPLE WHO NEED A HAND UP, A LIFT...
YEAH, WELL...WE'RE ALL GOING THROUGH TOUGH TIMES SINCE...Y'KNOW. I MEAN...CONNER.
I'M JUST NOT FEELING THIS WHOLE THING--
KARA...THIS IS WHY I'VE ASKED YOU FOR HELP ANSWERING THESE LETTERS.
THERE'S NO BETTER WAY TO GET THE "FEELING."
YOU'LL SEE.
DC 39

DEAR SUPERMAN
MY DADDEE IS A BRAVE SOLDIER
IN IRAK I MIS HIM.
I WULD LIK TO SEE HIM
EVEN JUST AN HOUR
NICE FROSTY. BUILD IT YOURSELF?
MAMA'S TOO TIRED TO HELP. DADDY'S NOT HOME.
BET HE'D LOVE TO SEE IT THOUGH, BROOKE. MAYBE WE SHOULD GO AND GET HIM...
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME--
OH!!!
IT SAYS IT RIGHT HERE, SILLY. NICE HANDWRITING...
AAAAAH!
HEY. YEAH, I KNOW, THIS IS WEIRD. BUT IF YOU CAN GIVE ME YOUR HUSBAND'S NAME AND WHERE HE'S STATIONED--
OH MY GOD... YOU-YOU CAN'T--
OH, IT'LL BE COOL. HE WON'T GET IN TROUBLE.
...AND QUITE A SET OF LUNGS. SPECIAL.
MOMMY MOMMY MOMMY!!! SUPERGIRL GOT MY LETTER!
STAY AWAY FROM US, AND MIND YOUR OWN DAMN BUSINESS.
SLAM
HO...HO... HO...

FAR BE IT FROM ME TO INTERFERE, BUT HAS IT OCCURRED TO YOU THAT PERHAPS...
...THE MOTHER KNOWS WHAT'S BEST FOR HER CHILD?
YEAH, FOR ABOUT TWO SECONDS. THEN I REMEMBERED I DON'T LIKE BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO...
ESPECIALLY WHEN I'M TRYING TO DO SOMETHING NICE.
WHICH I ALSO DON'T WANT TO DO. I HAVE ISSUES, AL.
NOT TO MENTION A PROBLEM WITH AUTHORITY.
THEY MAKE A NICE SET.
LAST SON OF A... HERE HE IS. FRED MATHISON... HE LIVES ONE TOWN OVER FROM BROOKE.
THERE'S NO MILITARY RECORD AT ALL.
GOTTA FLY. THANKS FOR THE YUMMIES.
TREAD LIGHTLY, DEAR HEART. SOME STONES ARE BEST LEFT UNTURNED.
TELL THAT TO THE LITTLE GIRL WAITING FOR HER DADDY TO SHOW UP FOR EGGNOG.
FOR BRUCE
I BELIEVE I JUST DID.

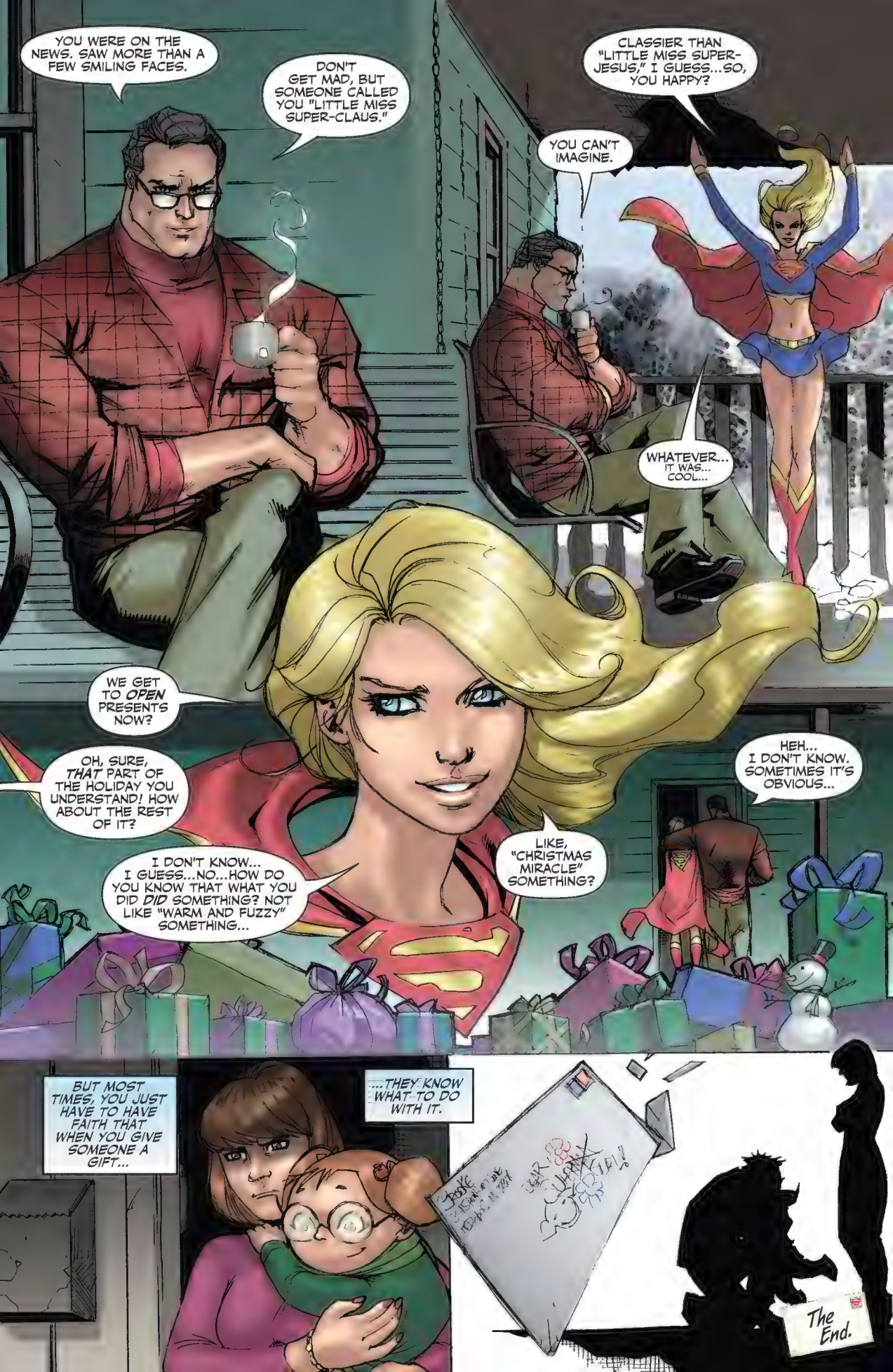
THE ALE HOUSE
GOT IT MIXED UP, FRED! CHRISTIAN CHARITY'S DOWN THE BLOCK, THIS IS A BAR!
COME BACK WHEN SANTA PAYS UP YER TAB.
HAA HAWW HA!
Yeah...Merry Christmas to you too, ya bum.
Know I'm good f'r--
WHAA!!
SLIP
SNOW'S A LITTLE WEIRD IN BAGHDAD, ISN'T IT, FREDDIE?
PERFECT.
I-I-I--
THE TAB'S JUST FIFTY BUCKS. I'LL PAY IT BACK.
HEH. YOU'RE FUNNY. LET'S TALK.
BROOKE.
REMEMBER HER?
A-ABOUT WHAT?

CUTE KID. GLASSES, RUNNY NOSE...THINKS HER DAD IS "STAYING THE COURSE"?
PROBABLY BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT HER TO KNOW THAT HER FATHER'S A SCREW-UP.
...
MINDY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE A GOOD IDEA. IRAQ.
WHY?
COME ON, FRED. SHE WON'T CARE--
THAT HE FOOLED AROUND WITH HIS PARTNER'S WIFE AND LOST THE BUSINESS. OR THAT WHEN HE ISN'T DRUNK HE ISN'T AWAKE--!
OR THAT HE NEVER WOULD HAVE MARRIED THAT WITCH IF SHE HADN'T SKIPPED HER PILL ON PURPOSE--!
BACK IT UP, SIR.
OR THAT HE NEVER WANTED A KID IN THE FIRST PLACE, SO REALLY, WHO GIVES A CRAP?!
PROBABLY THAT'S WHY... SINCE YOU ASKED.
...
...
TELL HER I'M DEAD. S'BETTER THAT WAY.
WHATEVER. I DON'T GIVE A DAMN. WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO TELL HER?

"I'M SORRY, HONEY...DADDY'S DEAD, MERRY CHRISTMAS."
YEAH, REAL SMOOTH...HOW ABOUT...?
"BROOKE, WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT LAND MINES?"
Sigh SHE'S BETTER OFF WITHOUT HIM, KARA. HE KNOWS IT. MOM KNOWS IT...
SHE'S BETTER OFF...
YOU WILL BE *OMEGA*. THE END OF THE HOUSE OF EL! *JUSTICE WILL PREVAIL*, AND THE *UNIVERSE WILL SIGH...*
AND...
F-FATHER...?
...AND...
KARA...

GOTTA BE SOMETHIN' TO DRINK. FREAKIN' SUPER--
CRISPER
WHISSSS
HSSSSSS
SO, FRED, I'VE BEEN THINKING...
Wh-wha-wh--
OH, YOU SHOULD SAVE YOUR BREATH. WE'RE AT 29,000 FEET. YOU DON'T WANT TO PASS OUT. ANYWAY...
ABOUT THE "TELL HER I'M DEAD" BIT. I THINK IT'S A GREAT IDEA. THERE'S JUST ONE PROBLEM, THOUGH...
I'M NOT ALLOWED TO LIE. IT'S AN S-THING.
O-OKAY...?
GOOD, I'M GLAD YOU UNDERSTAND.
AAAAAAAH

YOU KNOW THE CLICHÉ, FRED. EVERYONE DOES. "WHEN YOU'RE ABOUT TO DIE, YOUR LIFE FLASHES IN FRONT OF YOUR EYES."
BUT I'VE BEEN THERE, AND IT'S CRAP... ISN'T IT?
YOU DO SEE *SOMETHING*, THOUGH. YOU SEE THE *HOLES*...THE *MISSING BITS*...
AND ALL OF THE THINGS THAT *WOULD* HAVE MADE YOUR LIFE *COMPLETE*, IF YOU HAD ONE MORE YEAR...A DAY...A *SECOND*.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU SAW, FRED, BUT CONSIDERING YOU WERE IN FREE FALL FOR A SOLID MINUTE, I BET IT WAS AN EYEFUL.
MAYBE YOU ARE A SCREW-UP. A LOSER. A *DRUNK*.
BUT MAYBE, THE PIECE YOU'RE MISSING...CAN MAKE YOU SOMETHING BETTER.
BUT ONLY IF YOU GO TO HER, AND TRY.
MERRY CHRISTMAS, FRED.
HOPE IT'S A GOOD ONE.


YOU WERE ON THE NEWS. SAW MORE THAN A FEW SMILING FACES.
DON'T GET MAD, BUT SOMEONE CALLED YOU "LITTLE MISS SUPER-CLAUS."
CLASSIER THAN "LITTLE MISS SUPER-JESUS," I GUESS...SO, YOU HAPPY?
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE.
WHATEVER... IT WAS... COOL...
WE GET TO *OPEN* PRESENTS NOW?
OH, SURE, *THAT* PART OF THE HOLIDAY YOU UNDERSTAND! HOW ABOUT THE REST OF IT?
I DON'T KNOW... I GUESS...NO...HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT WHAT YOU DID *DID* SOMETHING? NOT LIKE "WARM AND FUZZY" SOMETHING...
LIKE, "CHRISTMAS MIRACLE" SOMETHING?
HEH... I DON'T KNOW. SOMETIMES IT'S OBVIOUS...
BUT MOST TIMES, YOU JUST HAVE TO HAVE FAITH THAT WHEN YOU GIVE SOMEONE A GIFT...
...THEY KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH IT.
The End.

THE TRIALS OF SHAZAM!

GIFT OF THE MAGI

TONY BEDARD - WRITER
MARCOS MARZ - PENCILLER
LUCIANA DEL NEGRO - INKER

ROD REIS - COLORIST
TRAVIS LANHAM - LETTERER
TOM PALMER JR. - ASSOCIATE EDITOR
MIKE CARLIN - EDITOR

WOW. AM I UNDER-DRESSED?
CONSIDERING I BOUGHT YOUR GOWN, YOU NEEDN'T ASK.
SORRY. IT'S JUST MY... *CLIENTS* USUALLY TAKE ME TO A CHEAP MOTEL, NOT THE COMPANY CHRISTMAS PARTY.
YOU'RE *SURE* THIS IS COOL?
TRUST ME, THESE PEOPLE ARE HARD TO SHOCK.
BESIDES, MY DEAR, I ONLY BROUGHT YOU--
--TO *SPIKE THE PUNCH.*
AH--!
GOOD TO THE LAST DROP...
CRUEL YULE, LEHNER. YOU'RE FINALLY HERE.
YEAH, MALCOLM, *NOW* IT'S A PARTY.

MOE'S BAR
GET LOST. PRIVATE EVENT TODAY.
OH, PLEASE. IT'S RACHEL ZALLMAN, NOW. OR JUST "ZALLY."
AS YOU WISH. THE WARRIOR AWAITS YOU WITHIN.
SEASONS GREETINGS, KING SOLOMON.
A SPORTS BAR?
WE COULDN'T COME UP WITH A BETTER PLACE THIS YEAR THAN A SPORTS BAR?
IT WAS THE OLYMPIANS' TURN TO CHOOSE. YOU KNOW HOW THEY ARE ABOUT SPORTS.
WELL, AT LEAST IT'S NOT VALHALLA AGAIN. MEAD GIVES ME A HANGOVER.

CRUEL YULE, SABINA.
SEASONS BEATINGS, TERROM. WHERE'D YOU FIND ALL THESE RICH STIFFS?
MOST OWE THEIR FORTUNES TO OUR INTERVENTION, THOUGH THIS IS THEIR FIRST MEETING WITH OUR NEW FORMS.
A TRIFLE UNDERWHELMING, I EXPECT.
I PREFERRED IT WHEN THEY SOILED THEMSELVES JUST LAYING EYES UPON US.
YEAH, YEAH, "MAGIC AIN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE. THE BIG BAD BOOK'S BEEN REWRITTEN." BLAH, BLAH, BLAH...
A LITTLE RESPECT, GIRL! WE MAY LOOK LIKE BANKERS NOW, BUT WE ARE STILL THE SONS OF MERLIN, AND YOUR BRIGHT FUTURE IS OURS TO GIVE...OR TAKE AWAY.
EXCUSE ME, MISTER LEHNER, BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM...
WHAT NOW?
IT'S THE BOY WE GOT FOR THE MIDNIGHT SACRIFICE. SEEMS HE FOUND OUT THE CEREMONY WOULD FLAY HIS SOUL, SO HE HANGED HIMSELF INSTEAD.
UNBELIEVABLE. TERROM'S GONNA HIT THE ROOF...
WHERE ARE WE SUPPOSED TO FIND A REPLACEMENT VIRGIN IN MANHATTAN AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT?
DOES THE SACRIFICE HAVE TO BE VIRGIN?
WELL...TECHNICALLY, NO, BUT THE VICTIM CAN'T HAVE BEEN INTIMATE IN THE LAST THIRTEEN MONTHS.
YOU'D HAVE TO BE SURE OF THAT, LEHNER. WHY EVEN ASK?
BECAUSE I MIGHT HAVE US A CANDIDATE...

WHY'D WE EVEN BOTHER THIS YEAR? NONE OF THE OTHERS ARE COMING.
OUR HOLIDAY MEET-UP IS A TRADITION WORTH KEEPING, ACHILLES, EVEN IF IT IS JUST THE TWO OF US THIS YEAR.
MY NAME'S ALVAREZ THESE DAYS. LIEUTENANT ALVAREZ.
AND THANKS, BUT NO, THANKS. IF MY SQUAD CAN'T ENJOY A COLD BEER, NEITHER WILL I.
SPEAKING OF WHICH, I'VE GOTTA POP BACK TO QURAC BEFORE THEY REPORT ME AWOL.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN GOING TO ASK ME ABOUT FREDDIE FREEMAN?
I'LL JUDGE HIM FOR MYSELF WHEN HE FINDS ME. IF HE FINDS ME.
DON'T ACT SO CAVALIER. EVERYTHING DEPENDS ON THAT BOY EARNING THE POWERS OF SHAZAM FROM US!
OR WOULD YOU RATHER HE FAILS, AND THAT TRAMP SABINA GETS MY WISDOM, YOUR COURAGE, HERCULES' STRENGTH, MERCURY'S SPEED...?
ALL RIGHT, SOLOMON, I'LL BITE.
IS THE FREEMAN BOY WORTHY?

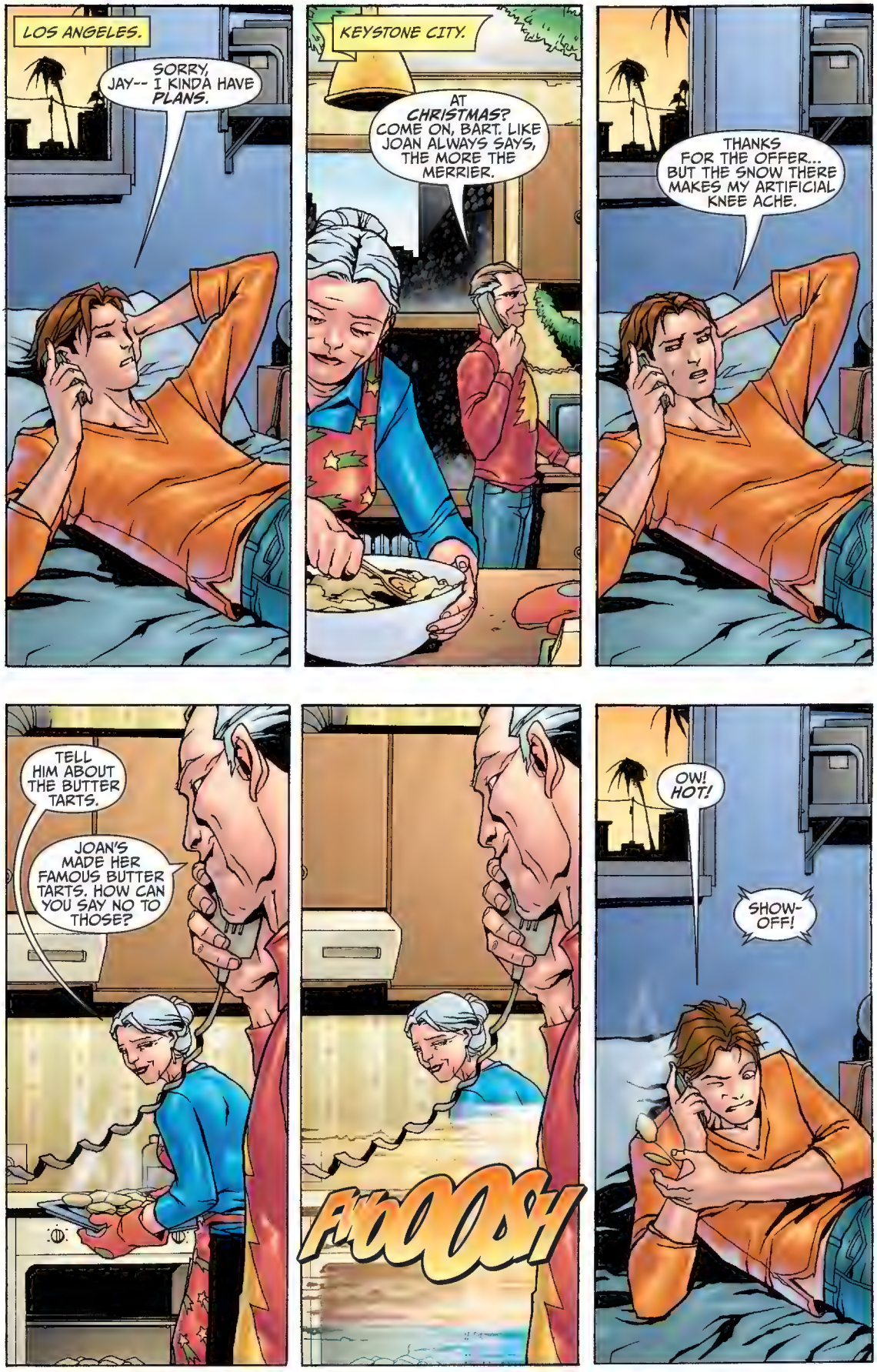
THIS THE ONE?
YEAH, THAT'S HIM.
WHAT? SHOVIN' ME WASN'T ENOUGH FOR YA?
JUDGING BY THE STENCH, I'M GUESSING YOU HAVEN'T KNOWN A WOMAN'S TOUCH IN OVER A YEAR?
ARE YOU SERIOUS?
I'LL TAKE THAT AS A YES.
WE'LL NEED YOU A BIT MORE PRESENTABLE.
WHU--?
SNAP
H-HOW DID YOU...?
GET HIM A CLEAN JACKET FROM ONE OF THE WAITERS.
YES, SIR.

I HAVE VERY HIGH HOPES FOR FREDDIE FREEMAN. THE STRENGTH IN HIM RUNS DEEPER THAN HE KNOWS.
WHEN I COVERED HIM WITH THE MARK OF WISDOM, THE PAIN COULD'VE EASILY KILLED A MAN TWICE HIS SIZE.
"COVERED." THAT'S RIGHT, YOU'RE A TATTOO ARTIST NOW.
MY NEW FORM MAKES SENSE FOR A GOD OF COURAGE, BUT YOURS?
I ALWAYS FIGURED WISDOM AND TATTOOS WERE POLAR OPPOSITES.
THIS NEW ORDER WE FIND OURSELVES IN HAS A LOGIC ALL ITS OWN. WE'LL COME TO UNDERSTAND IT IN TIME.
YOU, ME, ATLAS, HERCULES, ZEUS AND MERCURY-- ALL OF US SCATTERED TO OUR NEW LIVES...
...OUR ENEMIES TRADING THEIR CLOAKS AND WANDS FOR POWER TIES AND BUSINESS LUNCHES...
HOW MUCH HAVE YOU SEEN OF THEM? WOULD I EVEN RECOGNIZE ONE OF MERLIN'S SPAWN IN A FIREFIGHT?
WELL... I WALKED RIGHT PAST THEIR "BAH HUMBUG" PARTY TONIGHT AND THEY FAILED TO SPOT ME.
YOU WHAT?
AND THAT'S NOT ALL I DID...

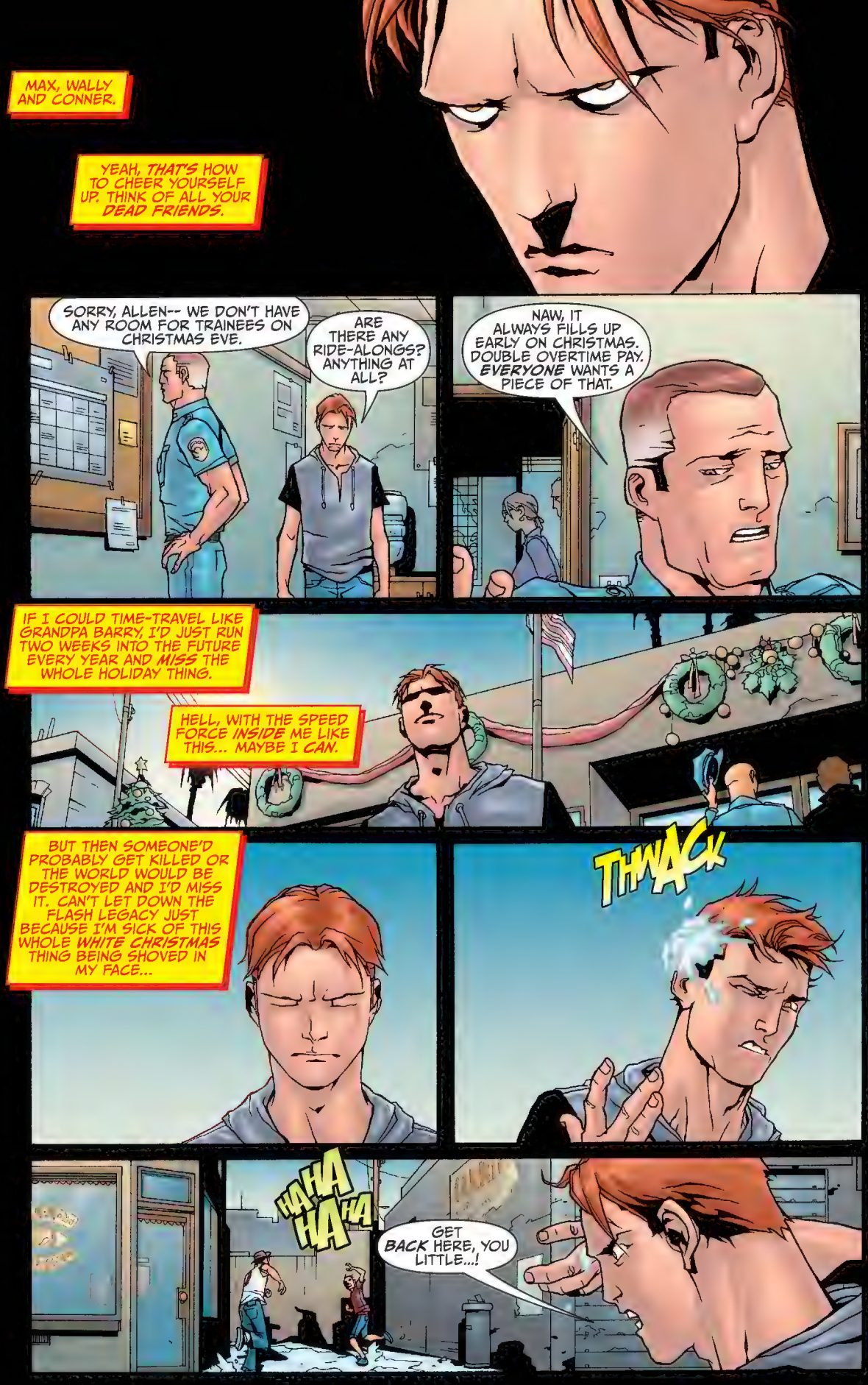
AND NOW, OUR YOUNG CHAMPION *SABINA* SHALL PERFORM THE WINTER SOLSTICE SACRIFICE...
...KEEPING AT BAY THE TIDE OF *GOODWILL* THAT SO VEXES OUR ILK AT THIS TIME OF YEAR!
HURRY IT UP--I'VE GOT FRIENDS *WAITING* FOR ME AT CLUB RIO.
ALL RIGHT, LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH...
THIS IS OUR SACRIFICE...?
THE FORTY-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN. GREAT.
SORRY, SIR. WE THREW HIS SHIRT AND COAT AWAY, AND I DIDN'T THINK HE'D...
THAT'S ALL THERE IS, SIR. JUST A *PAPER CUP*--FEELS LIKE A *COIN* INSIDE.
CHECK IT.
HOLD! I SENSE... SOMETHING *AMISS*. SOME SORT OF MAGICAL TAINT...
WAS THE VICTIM *SEARCHED?*

WEIRD. LOOKS LIKE GREEK, OR HEBREW...
SEVEN HELLS! DROP IT!
DROP IT!
SHRAKT
NYAHH!
YAHHHHH
AGEEEE...
AWASH

FLASH
AHHH!
SIR, THIS PARTY IS INVITATION ONLY.
IT'S OKAY. I INVITED HIM.
THE MAN JUST STRUCK A BLOW AGAINST THE FORCES OF DARKNESS. HE DESERVES A TALL COLD ONE!
COME. EAT, DRINK AND BE MERRY.
... M'OKAY...
SO WHAT IS THIS? AM I DEAD? IS THIS HEAVEN?
IF IT WERE, THE CHICKEN WINGS WOULD BE MUCH HOTTER.
HAPPY HOLIDAYS, ALL THE SAME.
The End
MV 2.6
DEL REY
ROD REIS

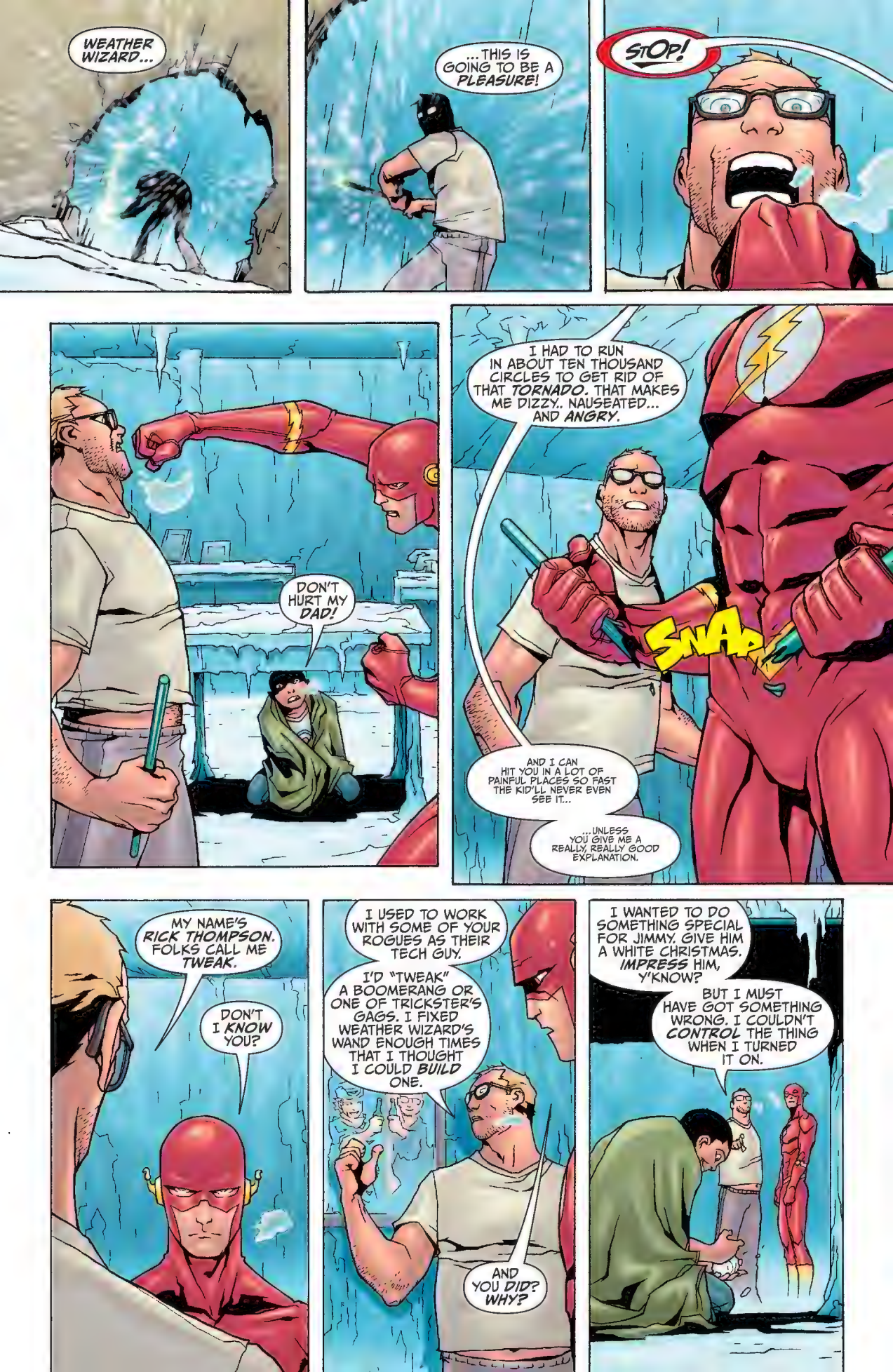

LOS ANGELES.
SORRY, JAY-- I KINDA HAVE PLANS.
KEYSTONE CITY.
AT CHRISTMAS? COME ON, BART. LIKE JOAN ALWAYS SAYS, THE MORE THE MERRIER.
THANKS FOR THE OFFER... BUT THE SNOW THERE MAKES MY ARTIFICIAL KNEE ACHE.
TELL HIM ABOUT THE BUTTER TARTS.
JOAN'S MADE HER FAMOUS BUTTER TARTS. HOW CAN YOU SAY NO TO THOSE?
FOOOSH
OW! HOT!
SHOW-OFF!

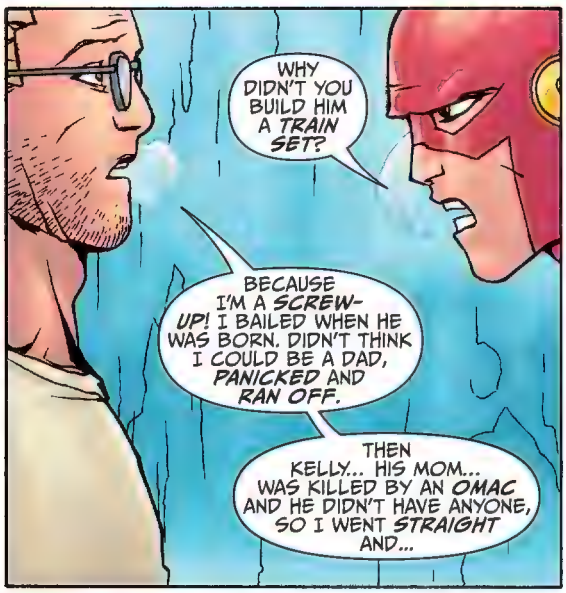
JAY AND JOAN MEAN WELL... BUT ALL THAT HOLIDAY STUFF DOESN'T MEAN MUCH WHEN YOU SPENT YOUR CHRISTMASES GROWING UP IN A VIRTUAL REALITY PROGRAM.
MY ONLY REAL HOLIDAY MEMORIES ARE OF LIFE-AND-DEATH BATTLES, LIKE FIGHTING MIRROR MASTER WITH MAX MERCURY...
MAX! MIRROR MASTER'S BROUGHT THE TINSEL TO LIFE!
HE CAN'T HEAR YOU, LAD-- HE'S HAVING A REFLECTIVE MOMENT!
CAPTAIN COLD WITH WALLY...
THIS IS... NOT COOL, YOU... LOUSY...!
WATCH IT, LEONARD-- WE STILL HAVEN'T DECIDED WHERE TO STICK THE CARROT YET!
AND WITH THE TITANS WHEN BRAINIAC POSSESSED THE JOKER AND BECAME INSANIAC.
CAREFUL, GUYS! HE CAN MAKE ANYTHING MECHANICAL GO CRAZY!
HEY, CYBORG! WHY ARE YOU HITTING YOURSELF? WHY ARE YOU HITTING YOURSELF?
UGH!
WHAM

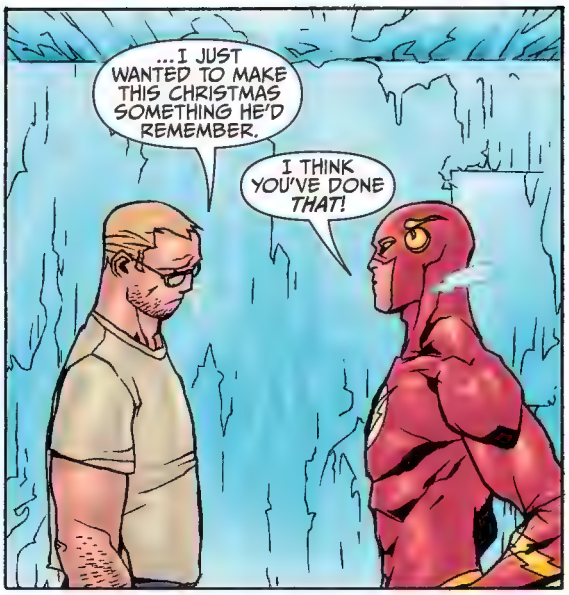

MAX, WALLY AND CONNER.
YEAH, THAT'S HOW TO CHEER YOURSELF UP. THINK OF ALL YOUR DEAD FRIENDS.
SORRY, ALLEN-- WE DON'T HAVE ANY ROOM FOR TRAINEES ON CHRISTMAS EVE.
ARE THERE ANY RIDE-ALONGS? ANYTHING AT ALL?
NAW, IT ALWAYS FILLS UP EARLY ON CHRISTMAS. DOUBLE OVERTIME PAY. EVERYONE WANTS A PIECE OF THAT.
IF I COULD TIME-TRAVEL LIKE GRANDPA BARRY, I'D JUST RUN TWO WEEKS INTO THE FUTURE EVERY YEAR AND MISS THE WHOLE HOLIDAY THING.
HELL, WITH THE SPEED FORCE INSIDE ME LIKE THIS... MAYBE I CAN.
BUT THEN SOMEONE'D PROBABLY GET KILLED OR THE WORLD WOULD BE DESTROYED AND I'D MISS IT. CAN'T LET DOWN THE FLASH LEGACY JUST BECAUSE I'M SICK OF THIS WHOLE WHITE CHRISTMAS THING BEING SHOVED IN MY FACE...
THWACK
HA HA HA HA
GET BACK HERE, YOU LITTLE...!

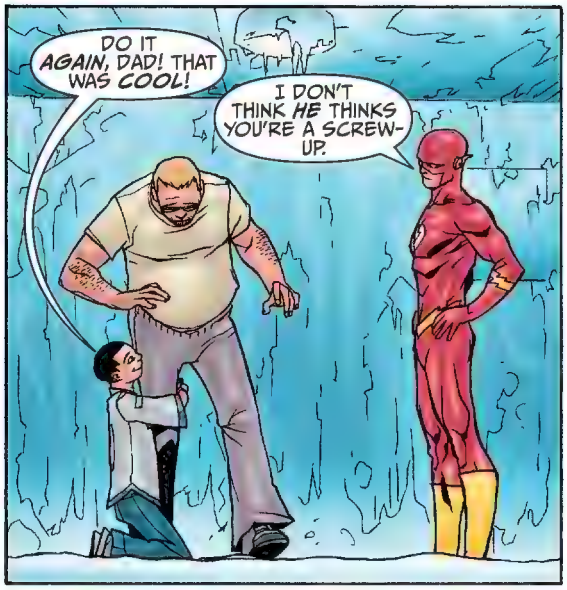
SNOW? IN L.A.?
MUST BE CAPTAIN COLD. OR THE ICICLE. OR KILLER FROST. OR MR. FREEZE OR... DAMN, THAT COLD THING IS ONE OVERUSED SUPERVILLAIN THEME...
WALLY'D NEVER HAVE LET HIMSELF GET HIT IN THE FACE WITH A SNOWBALL.
WELL... AT LEAST THEY'RE NOT MAKING THEMSELVES HARD TO FIND.

KAA-BOOM
LIGHTNING NOW TOO?
OKAY, THAT'S IT...
A COUPLE OF SUPERSPEED VORTEXES SHOULD BLOW AWAY THAT BLIZZARD. SO IF THAT'S ALL HE'S GOT TO KEEP ME OUT...
OKAY, SO THAT'S NOT ALL HE'S GOT.
GAH!

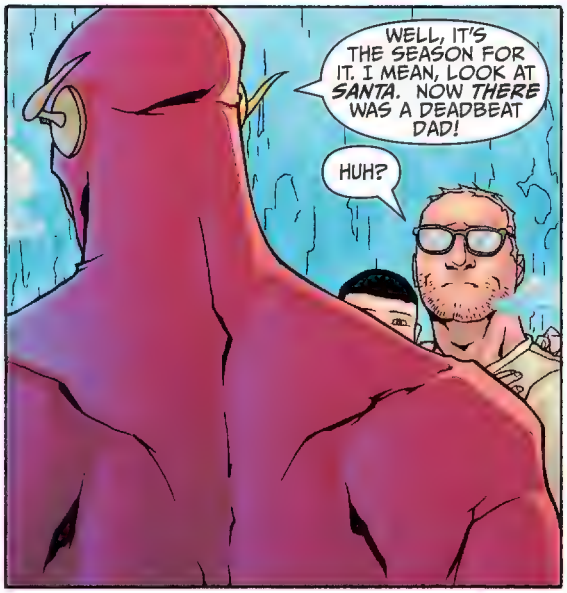

WEATHER WIZARD...
...THIS IS GOING TO BE A PLEASURE!
STOP!
DON'T HURT MY DAD!
I HAD TO RUN IN ABOUT TEN THOUSAND CIRCLES TO GET RID OF THAT TORNADO. THAT MAKES ME DIZZY.. NAUSEATED... AND ANGRY.
SNAP
AND I CAN HIT YOU IN A LOT OF PAINFUL PLACES SO FAST THE KID'LL NEVER EVEN SEE IT...
...UNLESS YOU GIVE ME A REALLY, REALLY GOOD EXPLANATION.
MY NAME'S RICK THOMPSON. FOLKS CALL ME TWEAK.
DON'T I KNOW YOU?
I USED TO WORK WITH SOME OF YOUR ROGUES AS THEIR TECH GUY.
I'D "TWEAK" A BOOMERANG OR ONE OF TRICKSTER'S GAGS. I FIXED WEATHER WIZARD'S WAND ENOUGH TIMES THAT I THOUGHT I COULD BUILD ONE.
AND YOU DID? WHY?
I WANTED TO DO SOMETHING SPECIAL FOR JIMMY. GIVE HIM A WHITE CHRISTMAS. IMPRESS HIM, Y'KNOW?
BUT I MUST HAVE GOT SOMETHING WRONG. I COULDN'T CONTROL THE THING WHEN I TURNED IT ON.


WHY DIDN'T YOU BUILD HIM A *TRAIN SET?*
BECAUSE I'M A *SCREW-UP!* I BAILED WHEN HE WAS BORN. DIDN'T THINK I COULD BE A DAD, *PANICKED* AND *RAN OFF.*
THEN KELLY... HIS MOM... WAS KILLED BY AN *OMAC* AND HE DIDN'T HAVE ANYONE, SO I WENT *STRAIGHT* AND...


...I JUST WANTED TO MAKE THIS CHRISTMAS SOMETHING HE'D REMEMBER.
I THINK YOU'VE DONE *THAT!*


DO IT *AGAIN,* DAD! THAT WAS *COOL!*
I DON'T THINK *HE* THINKS YOU'RE A SCREW-UP.

YOUR *LANDLORD,* ON THE OTHER HAND...
YEAH, NOW WE'RE HOMELESS, THAT'S WHAT I GET FOR BEING A DEADBEAT DAD TRYING TO MAKE UP FOR LOST TIME.


WELL, IT'S THE SEASON FOR IT. I MEAN, LOOK AT *SANTA.* NOW *THERE* WAS A DEADBEAT DAD!
HUH?

ST. NICHOLAS. HE HAD TEN KIDS AND LEFT THEM *ALL* TO LIVE THE LIFE OF A *HERMIT.*
SOME FOLKS THINK THAT THE REASON SANTA LEAVES PRESENTS FOR CHILDREN EVERY YEAR IS TO MAKE UP FOR ABANDONING HIS *OWN.*

MY FRIEND RICKY'S BROTHER SAYS THERE'S *NO WAY* SANTA CAN BE FAST ENOUGH TO GO AROUND THE WHOLE WORLD IN A *NIGHT*.
WHY NOT? I CAN DO IT IN A *MINUTE*. WANNA SEE?
SURE!
LOOK-- I SAVED A HOTEL DOWN THE STREET FROM A FIRE LAST WEEK.
I'M SURE THE OWNER WOULD LET YOU STAY THERE UNTIL YOU GET BACK ON YOUR FEET.
THANKS.
BUT A HOTEL'S NO PLACE TO SPEND CHRISTMAS. CLIMB ON BOARD!
WHAT?
UH, DON'T YOU THINK WE'RE GOING A LITTLE *FAST*?
WHAT'S THAT? YOU SAY YOU WANNA GO *FASTER*? WELL, OKAY...
YEAH!
AAAAHHHH!

YOU'RE SURE WE'RE NOT... IMPOSING?
NAH! LIKE JOAN ALWAYS SAYS, THE MORE THE...
BUTTER TARTS!
I KNOW YOU'VE ALREADY READ EVERYTHING MARK TWAIN WROTE, BUT WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE IT...
"FOLLOWING THE EQUATOR"? IS THIS A SIGNED FIRST EDITION? IT MUST HAVE COST A FORTUNE!
JUST SOMETHING I PICKED UP DURING A TIME-TRAVEL FIGHT WITH PER DEGATON. TWAIN WAS HAPPY TO SIGN IT AFTER I SAVED HIM FROM DROWNING IN THE MISSISSIPPI.
I HOPE THE REST OF YOU BROUGHT YOUR APPETITES. THE TURKEY'S ALMOST READY!
JAY, TURN ON THE RADIO AND FIND SOME CHRISTMAS CAROLS!
...AND MURMUR HAS THREATENED TO CUT OUT THE TONGUES OF THE KEYSTONE COMMUNITY CHOIR UNLESS HIS DEMANDS ARE MET...
OH, JUST GO!
I'LL KEEP YOUR PLATES WARM.
SIGH!
WOW!

The approach of Christmas brings harassment and dread to many excellent people. They have to buy a cart-load of presents, and they never know what to buy to hit the various tastes.
They put in three weeks of hard and anxious work, and when Christmas morning comes they are so dissatisfied with the result, and so disappointed that they want to sit down and cry.
Then they give thanks that Christmas comes but once a year.
Mark Twain, Following the Equator: a journey around the world.
Father Christmas
Jan Boothby – writer
Giuseppe Camuncoli – penciller
Lorenzo Ruggiero – inker
John J. Hill – letterer
Hi-Fi Design – colorist
Rachel Gluckstern – associate editor
Joan Hilty – editor

"I DON'T BELIEVE IN MIRACLES, KATYA.
LIGHTS
Greg Rucka writer Christian Alamy artist
Jason Wright colorist Jared K. Fletcher letterer
Michael Siglain assoc. editor Peter Tomasi editor
POLAND, DECEMBER, 1939.
"I HAVEN'T FOR OVER SIX DECADES.
"I'M SORRY, BUT I DON'T.
"I CAN'T."

AND THAT, KATYA, IS WHY I DON'T LIGHT IT.
I WILL NOT CELEBRATE A MIRACLE WHEN I DO NOT BELIEVE IN SUCH THINGS.
BUT I'M HOLDING ONE RIGHT HERE, MANYA. HOW ELSE COULD THIS HAVE SURVIVED THE SHOAH?
FEH.
A NEIGHBOR SALVAGED IT. MUCH THE SAME WAY HE SALVAGED MY MOTHER'S JEWELRY AND MY FATHER'S PAINTINGS.
AFTER WE WERE LIBERATED, I WENT BACK TO POLAND, BACK TO WHERE THE HOUSE ONCE WAS.
HE RETURNED IT TO ME OUT OF GUILT. THE REST, HE SAID HE'D SOLD.
WITH HIS OWN HANDS MY FATHER MADE THAT HANUKIAH, KATYA! HANDS THE NAZIS TURNED TO ASH!
MY FATHER, MY MOTHER, MY BROTHERS, MY SISTER-- ALL TURNED TO ASH!
YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, SHOULD SHARE MY DESPAIR, TO LOSE SO MUCH FAMILY BLOOD!
...FORGIVE ME...
I'M AN OLD WOMAN, EAGER TO VISIT MY PAIN ON THE YOUNG.
IT'S ALL RIGHT.
I'LL SEE YOU NEXT TIME, MANYA.

GOTHAM CITY.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.
"THANK YOU" IS TRADITIONAL, COLONEL.
"HAPPY HANUKAH" WORKS IN A PINCH.
THANK YOU.
HAPPY HANUKAH.
WHERE THE HELL DID YOU *FIND* IT, KATE?
I HAVE MY SOURCES, DAD.
WHO? CATWOMAN?
FIRST EDITION, NEAR-MINT... I DON'T EVEN WANT TO KNOW HOW MUCH THIS SET YOU BACK, KIDDO.
IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER, IT WAS MOSTLY *HAMILTON* MONEY BEHIND IT, NOT MINE.
YOU MEAN YOUR *MOTHER'S* MONEY.
*STEP-*MOTHER, DAD.
SPEAKING OF WHOM, CATHERINE WANTS TO KNOW IF YOU'LL BE BRINGING A *DATE* TO THE CHRISTMAS PARTY.
SHE AFRAID I'LL EMBARRASS HER?
NO MORE THAN USUAL, I EXPECT.
TELL HER SHE'S GOT NOTHING TO *WORRY* ABOUT...

"...I ALREADY HAVE PLANS FOR THE NIGHT."

SKKRKKSHH

AHHH!

HO.

IT'S *HIM*, IT'S THE BAT--

UKK!

HO.

--SHOOT, SOMEBODY SHOOT--

HO.

GNH!

SHUNK

NHNN!

SHUNK

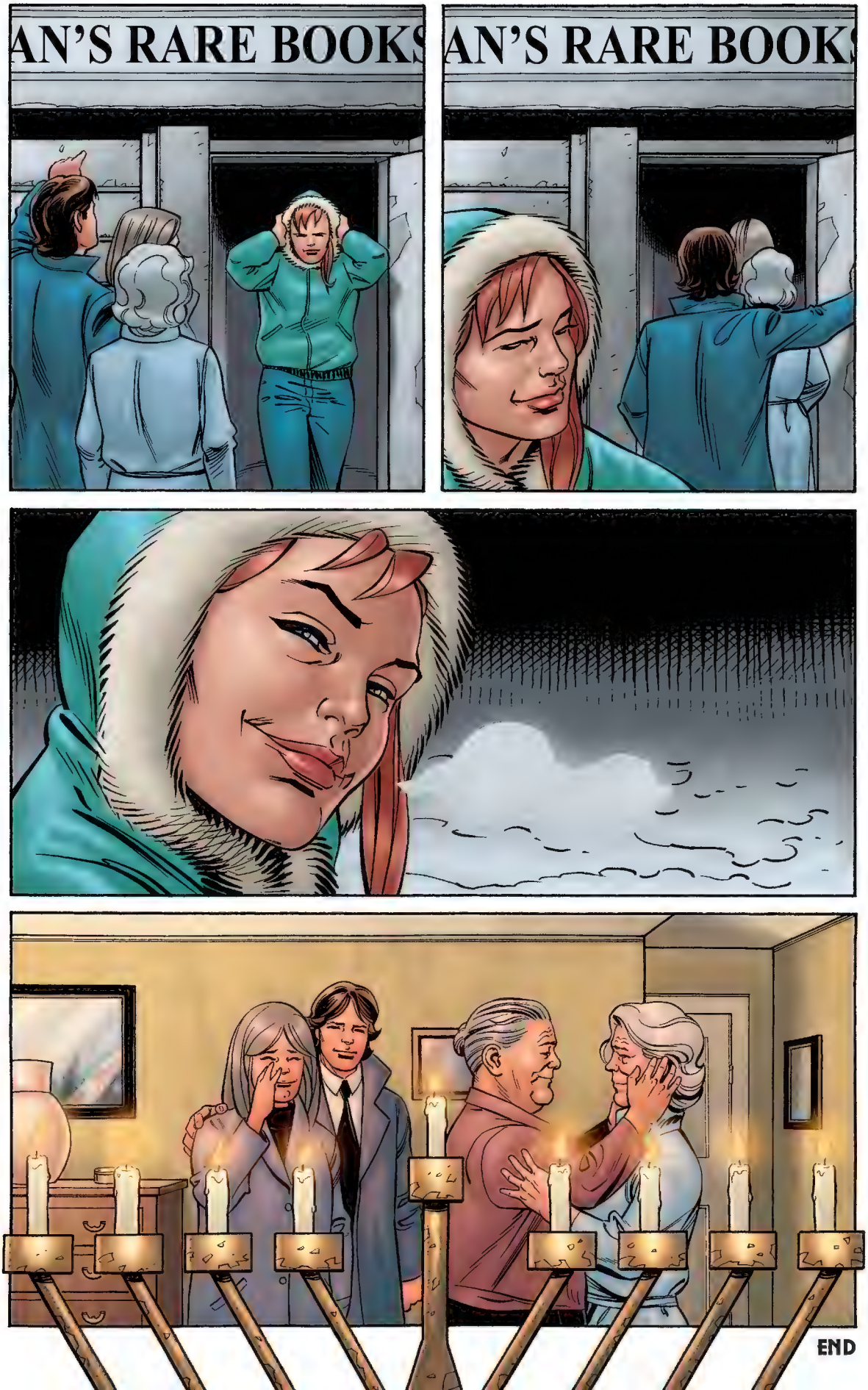
UHHNN!

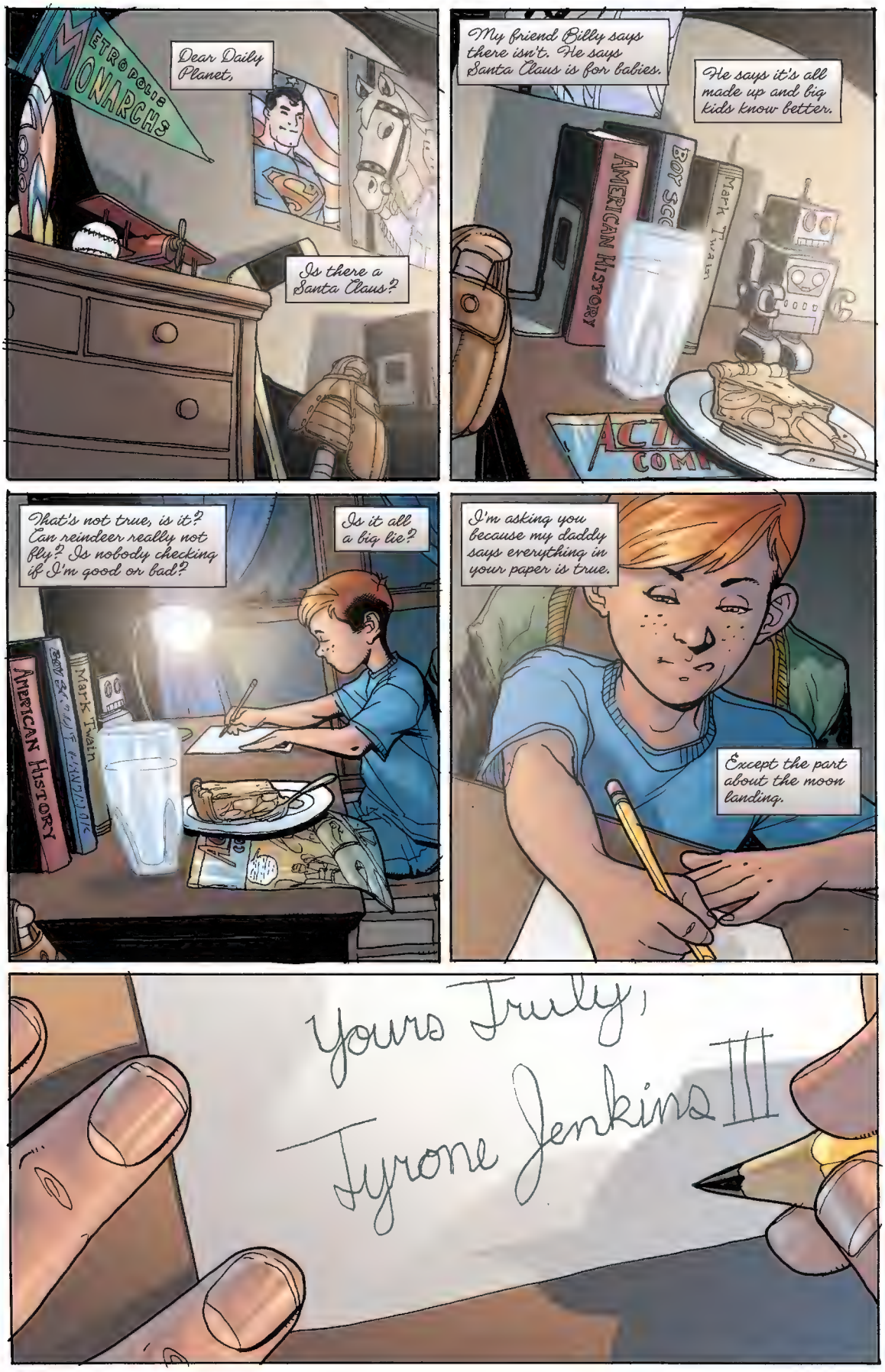
I DON'T KNOW ABOUT *YOU* BOYS...
...BUT *I'M* FEELING PRETTY *JOLLY* RIGHT ABOUT...
...NOW.

YAAH!
LOTS OF SMALL BONES IN THE HAND.
VERY BREAKABLE.
VERY DELICATE.
NOW, TELL ME WHERE YOU STOLE THIS FROM...
...OR I'LL INTRODUCE YOU TO EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THOSE VERY BREAKABLE, VERY DELICATE BONES IN EACH OF YOUR HANDS.

"I SAW YOUR MENORAH YESTERDAY, MANYA."
"WHY DO YOU MAKE FUN OF AN OLD WOMAN, KATYA? YOU SAW NO SUCH THING."
"I DID. THE *SAME* MENORAH, MANYA, I'M CERTAIN OF IT."
x4
"FEH. I TOLD YOU, MY FATHER, HE *MADE* IT WITH HIS OWN HANDS FOR US, FOR HIS *CHILDREN.* ONLY THE ONE. THERE ARE *NO* MORE."
"A *REPLICA* OF IT, THEN. I KNOW WHAT I SAW."
x8
"NO. YOUR EYES TRICK YOU, KATYA. ONLY A MEMBER OF MY FAMILY COULD BEGIN TO DESCRIBE MY FATHER'S HANUNKIAH..."
x16
"...AND I HAVE *NO* FAMILY LEFT."

"...HERE."
"WHAT ARE YOU DOING? KATYA?!"
"I'M PUTTING THE CANDLES IN, WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?"
FEDLEX
"I TOLD YOU, IT DOES NOT SEE WAX!"
"YES, YOU SAID. SO I'LL LIGHT IT."
"KATYA!"
FEDLEX
"YOUR FATHER MADE THIS?"
"AND NOW YOU DON'T LISTEN? I TOLD YOU ALREADY, YES."
"HE MADE IT TO BE USED, MANYA..."
FEDLEX
KETTERMAN'S
RARE BOOKS
KETTERMAN'S RARE BOOKS
...HE MADE IT TO CELEBRATE THE FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS.
HE MADE IT FOR HIS CHILDREN.
HE MADE IT TO CELEBRATE A MIRACLE.

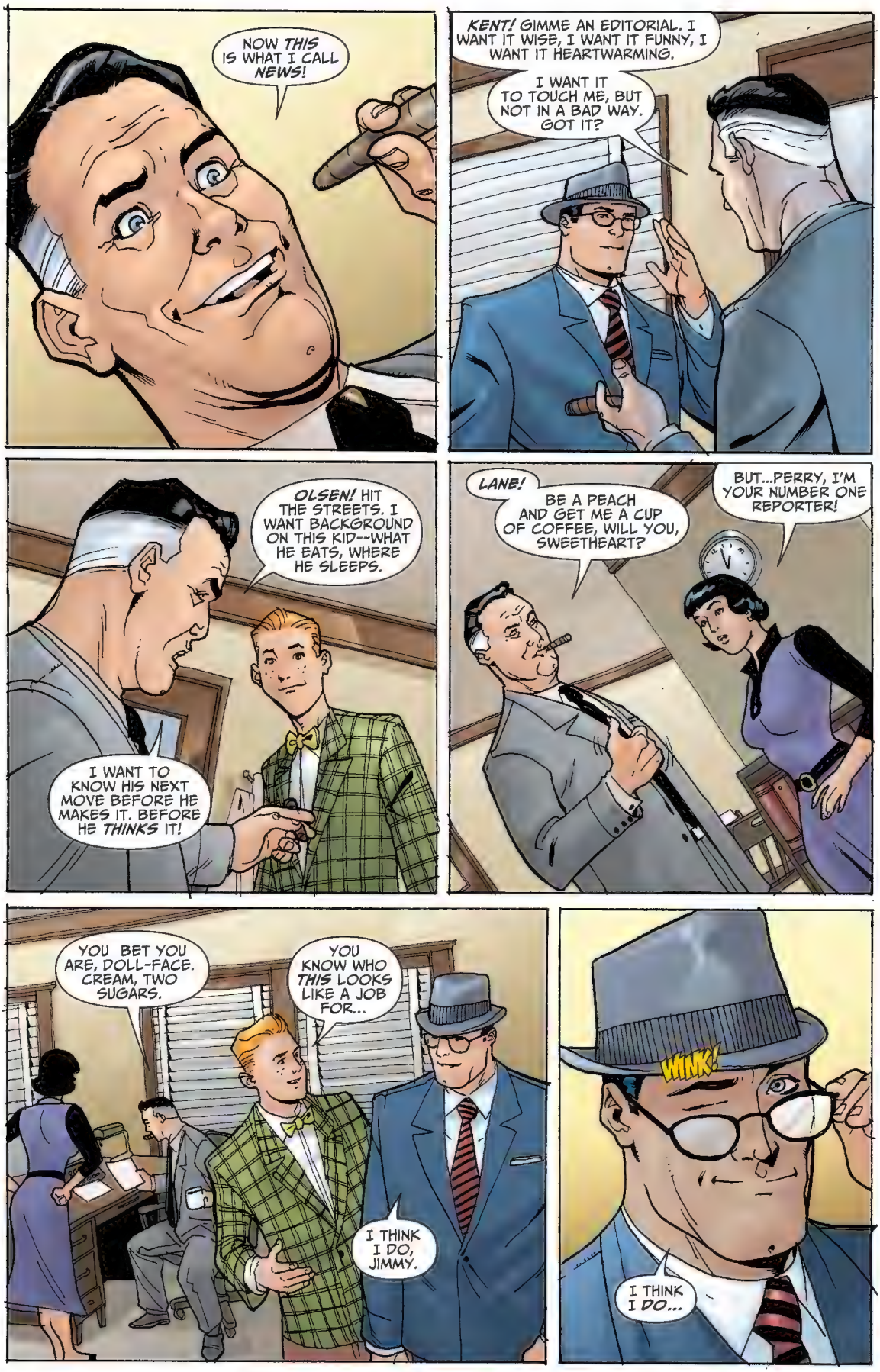

AN'S RARE BOOKS
AN'S RARE BOOKS
END


METROPOLIS MONARCHS
Dear Daily Planet,
Is there a Santa Claus?
My friend Billy says there isn't. He says Santa Claus is for babies.
He says it's all made up and big kids know better.
AMERICAN HISTORY
Mark Twain
That's not true, is it? Can reindeer really not fly? Is nobody checking if I'm good or bad?
Is it all a big lie?
I'm asking you because my daddy says everything in your paper is true.
Except the part about the moon landing.
Yours Truly,
Tyrone Jenkins III

YES, TYRONE, THERE IS A SANTA CLAUS

Kelley Puckett Writer
Pete Woods Artist
Phil Balsman Letterer
Brad Anderson Colorist
Nachie Castro Assistant Editor
Matt Idelson Editor

Superman created by Jerry Siegal & Joe Shuster • Batman created by Bob Kane


NOW THIS IS WHAT I CALL NEWS!
KENT! GIMME AN EDITORIAL. I WANT IT WISE, I WANT IT FUNNY, I WANT IT HEARTWARMING.
I WANT IT TO TOUCH ME, BUT NOT IN A BAD WAY. GOT IT?
OLSEN! HIT THE STREETS. I WANT BACKGROUND ON THIS KID--WHAT HE EATS, WHERE HE SLEEPS.
I WANT TO KNOW HIS NEXT MOVE BEFORE HE MAKES IT. BEFORE HE THINKS IT!
LANE!
BE A PEACH AND GET ME A CUP OF COFFEE, WILL YOU, SWEETHEART?
BUT...PERRY, I'M YOUR NUMBER ONE REPORTER!
YOU BET YOU ARE, DOLL-FACE. CREAM, TWO SUGARS.
YOU KNOW WHO THIS LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR...
I THINK I DO, JIMMY.
WINK!
I THINK I DO...

WRAPPING

FOR "SANTA."

MAGIC TIME.

WHAT?

PATHETIC.
FOR GOD'S SAKE, MAN. LOOK AT YOURSELF.
WHAT ARE YOU *DOING* OUT HERE?
RESTORING A CHILD'S SENSE OF WONDER? TEACHING HIM THAT THE WORLD CAN BE A MAGICAL PLACE?
YEAH, WELL, MY PARENTS TAUGHT ME A DIFFERENT LESSON...
...LYING IN THE ALLEY...
...TWITCHING...
SORRY. LOOK...

...MY POINT IS THAT YOU'VE GOT TO TAKE YOURSELF SERIOUSLY. YOU'RE THE HERO!
ANY CALAMITY, ANY DISASTER, ANY GREAT WRONG AND PEOPLE LOOK TO THE SKY. FOR YOU.
THE IDEA THAT YOU COULD TAKE A NIGHT OFF PLAYING DRESS-UP FOR SOME KID?
IT'S PATENTLY RIDICULOUS.
IT'S LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A COMIC BOOK.
I DO FEEL A LITTLE SILLY IN THIS OUTFIT...
BUT THAT POOR KID. I JUST WISH I COULD... DO SOMETHING FOR HIM.
THAT JUST SHOWS WHAT A TRUE HERO YOU ARE.
NOW GET OUT THERE, TIGER. SAVE THE WORLD!
YOU'RE RIGHT. THANKS, BATMAN.

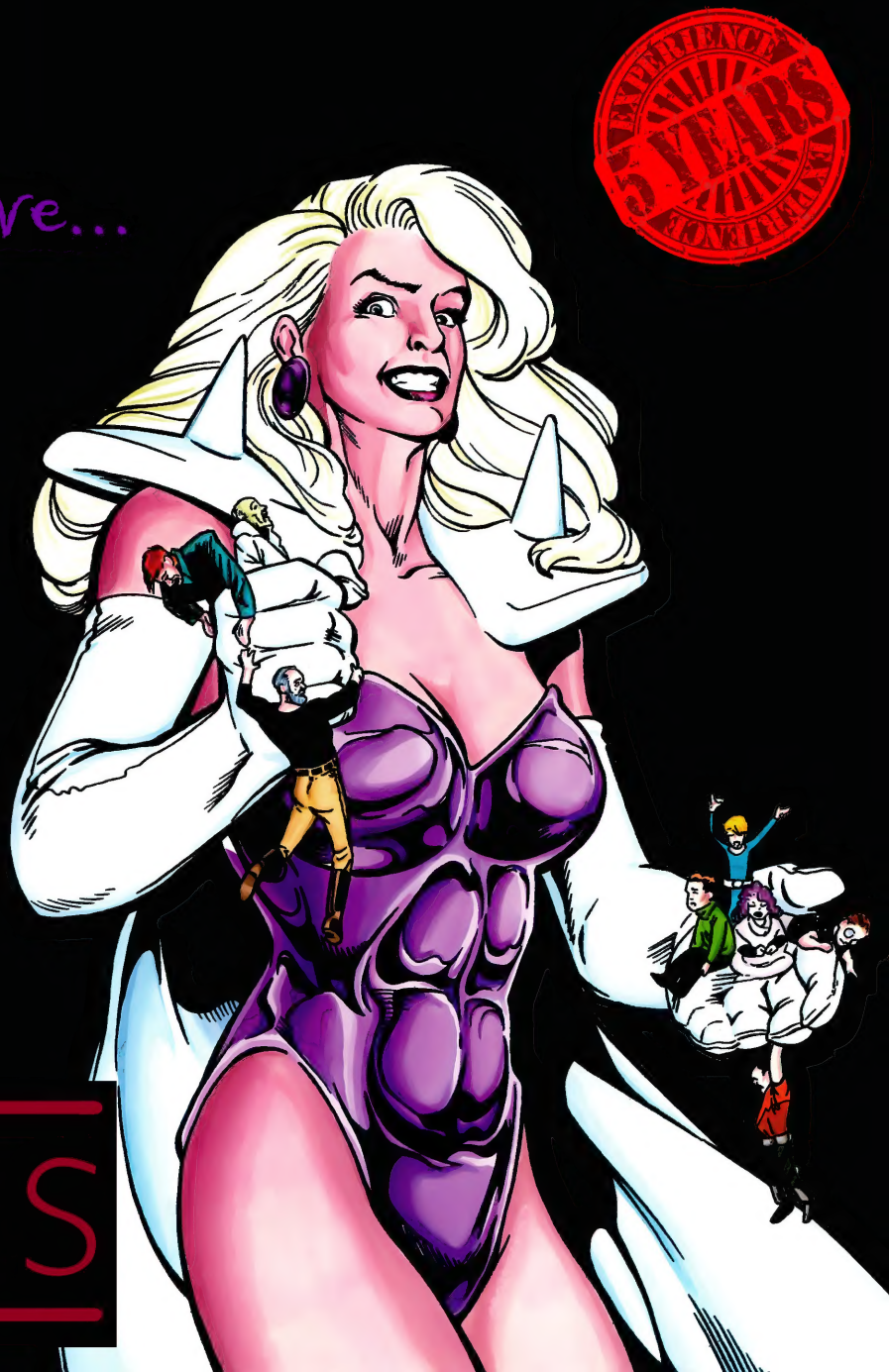
I SUPPOSE I SHOULD DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT WHOLE MIDDLE EAST THING...
WAIT--THE *PRESENTS.* I SHOULD AT LEAST LEAVE HIM HIS PRESENTS...

BAT-SANTA, YOU'RE THE BEST!
I LOVE YOU, BAT-SANTA!
HOHOHO! MERRY CHRISTMAS!
WINK!

Season's Greetings!
ELSEWORLDS

Season's Greetings!
HI! DAN DIDIO HERE, AND AS EXECUTIVE EDITOR OF THE DC UNIVERSE I SINCERELY HOPE YOU ENJOYED THE SERIES OF STORIES WE JUST PRESENTED. THIS GANG OF CRAZED BUT CREATIVE EDITORS BEHIND ME BROUGHT TOGETHER A WONDERFUL GROUP OF TALENT TO BUILD THOSE TALES TO GET YOU IN THE HOLIDAY SPIRIT.
AS FOR ME, I'D LIKE TO TAKE THIS MOMENT TO RAISE MY GLASS AND TOAST YOU, THE GREATEST COMICS FANS AROUND.
SO FROM ALL OF US IN DC EDITORIAL, TO ALL OF YOU IN THE DC NATION, WE WANT TO WISH YOU THE MERRIEST OF HOLIDAYS AND THE HAPPIEST OF NEW YEARS.
THANKS FOR JOINING US, AND I HOPE YOU PLAN TO STAY AROUND. THE BEST IS YET TO COME.
PEACE.
ART BY PHIL JIMENEZ
COLORS BY MARK CHIARELLO
LETTERS BY ROB LEIGH
NO MORE X
A Christmas Carol

From Baaldur, with love...



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